Honoring the Pride of Peoria

Category: Publications and Electronic Media | Social Media Campaign

For the past 35 years, the Peoria Unified School District has recognized the top one percent of its employees by classifying these stellar individuals as the Pride of Peoria. To be considered for this incredibly remarkable recognition, an employee must be in their current role for a minimum of three years, and they must exemplify certain qualities that are embedded in Peoria Unified’s mission, vision and values. The district also recognizes employees who are new to their position with the Rookie of the Year award. To be eligible for Rookie of the Year, a candidate must be in their first or second year in their current position with the district.

One step beyond being a Pride of Peoria or Rookie of the Year recipient is Peoria Unified’s version of a lifetime achievement award; the Raymond S. Kellis Leadership Award. This award is named after a former superintendent who led Peoria Unified through its largest period of growth and advocated for public education throughout Arizona. Employees who have made significant contributions to the advancement of the district’s mission, vision and values can be nominated for the esteemed Raymond S. Kellis Leadership Award.

A study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Managers Association found that employee recognition programs, such as the Pride of Peoria, have a positive impact on employee retention and 56 percent of those surveyed shared that these programs also help with recruitment.

Traditionally, this award recognition campaign concludes with an in-person award reception to celebrate Peoria Unified’s well-deserving employees who have earned the ranks of being a Pride of Peoria recipient, or a Raymond S. Kellis Leadership Award winner. Due to COVID-19, this event was cancelled and the comms team had to pivot from its previously scheduled recognition ceremony at Arizona Broadway Theatre. In 2021, the comms team used its strong digital footprint and chose to highlight each of the winners via its ever-growing @InsidePeoria Twitter account and on the district’s main Facebook page throughout the month of May, to coincide with Teacher Appreciation Month.

Each social media post highlighted the employee’s contributions to Peoria Unified and accompanied a video of them receiving the award during Prize Patrol, where district leaders, the comms team, and a small group of nominators surprise the winners on their campuses. With 4,000 employees and 41 people being recognized on more than 20 campuses, Peoria Unified’s new superintendent attended each Prize Patrol surprise reveal as they were filmed. Each social media post included #PrideOfPeoria2021 to allow well-wishers to view each recipient being surprised on their campus. The comms team then built out a web page for the 2021 recipients. After each winner was recognized on social media, they could visit the website and see a complete list of winners at www.peoriaunified.org/prideofpeoria. Once the comms team shared the winners on the district’s social media account, the winners were then shared on the schools’ social media accounts, which widened the audience. This increased the reach and allowed parents, staff and community members to jump in on the celebration by posting comments and resounding words of support for the Pride of Peoria recipients.

In addition to the campaign, many of the posts are shared on LinkedIn throughout the year to assist with recruitment. Each fall the posts are used to excite Peoria Unified employees for the next campaign.

Due to these posts, @InsidePeoria saw 2.8 percent increase in engagement throughout the campaign and each video averaged 52 views on YouTube.

While work is being done to bring the employee recognition event back in-person, the comms team is looking for ways to continue this integration on their social channels going forward. The Pride of Peoria Gala can, at most, include 400 individuals. Thanks to this social media campaign during the pandemic, the comms team was able to reach over 2,000 community members.
During Kristen Shannon’s 20 years as a bus driver, she has displayed compassion, warmth, understanding, and empathy for all students she transports. Kristin cares for the health and well-being of every student she transports on her bus.

#PrideOfPeoria2021
youtu.be/AS8lJ-5N910
Inside Peoria
@InsidePeoria

Congrats to Coach Zach Bussey! Zach enriches life here at @CeHSAZ with his down to earth personality and upbeat take on life. In and out of the classroom, Zach watches out for kids and does what is best for them. #PrideOfPeoria2021
youtu.be/6mKbqrxrIRe
Solving challenging problems appears to be easy for Patty Davis-Moore from @PeoriaPanthers. She is a creative and critical thinker who routinely thinks outside the box to provide a variety of solutions for students, staff and families. #PrideOfPeoria2021
youtu.be/65YLIOjQ0Uc
Julie Pike is an exceptional English teacher. She has been a member of @IronwoodHS since 1989. She has been involved in extra-curricular activities through her work with Student Council as the Senior class sponsor for many years. #PrideOfPeoria2021 youtu.be/to_kgFvd2v0